



## News

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### Rain continues to slow corn planting progress

By Chuck Stinnett (Contact)  
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Fantastic prices exist for corn and soybeans, but Henderson County farmers face a serious obstacle: The rain won't stop long enough for them to get their crop planted.

"We might be in the neighborhood of 30 percent" of the corn crop planted here so far, Henderson County Extension Agent Mike Smith said Monday.

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"Normally, it's 50 or 60 percent" by this time of year, he said.

And the near-term weather forecast isn't helping. There's a 20- to 30-percent chance of thunderstorms tonight and Wednesday, increasing to 70 percent on Thursday.

Already, 7.31 inches of rain fell in Henderson from April 1 through Sunday night, which is 2.46 inches more than normal, according to the University of Kentucky Agricultural Weather Center.

And there's been little hot weather to help dry and warm the soil.

"By this time last year, we had had some 80-degree days," Smith recalled. This year, temperatures have struggled to get into the 70s and are "still dropping into the 40s at night."

"The soil has been so wet that it's taken forever to warm it up," he said.

"The plants have been slow to emerge, Smith said. "They're coming up yellow because they have a poorly developed root system. I'd have to rate our corn crop at good to fair. That's about it."

"The other thing that concerns me is we're getting a heavy flight of army worms," he said. "That is a concern. This crop is very susceptible to anything like that. We need to watch fields."

Statewide, 54 percent of Kentucky's corn crop was planted as of Sunday, compared with the five-year average of 76 percent, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Only 18 percent of corn plant have emerged, compared with the average of 51 percent. The crop is rated in mostly good to fair condition.

Some soybeans could get planted here in a couple of weeks, although wide-scale planting could still be a month away with so much corn planting left.

"This looks like one of those years when we could see ... corn and soybeans and tobacco going in at the same time," Smith said.

Meanwhile, the winter wheat "looks fairly good," although stands aren't as good as might appear from the roadway, he said.

"The cool temperatures are ideal wheat-growing temperatures," Smith said. "It's warm and wet when we start seeing disease."

Hay crops and pastures remain in mostly good to fair condition, with the first alfalfa cutting expected this Friday, the ag statistics service said.



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